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EXAMINER

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/698,849

Filing Date: October 31, 2003

Appellant(s): MORCINIEC ET AL.

MAILED

JUN 01 2007

Robert Popa
For Appellant

GROUP 3600

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 3/16/2007 appealing from the Office action mailed 10/10/2006.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

No amendment after final has been filed.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0010463 A1, Hahn-Carlson et al.,
Publication Date Jan. 15, 2004

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims. The ground(s) for rejection are reproduced below from the final Office Action and are provided here for the convenience of both Appellant and The Board of Patent Appeals:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-15, 17 and 19-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hahn-Carlson (Patent Application Publication 2004/0010463 A1).

Referring to claim 1. Hahn-Carlson discloses an apparatus for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service at a particular purchasing time from a plurality of potential suppliers (Hahn-Carlson: at least claim 14, "...wherein the pricing engine is adapted to identify prices for a particular transaction between the buyer and a plurality of sellers and to inform the buyer of the prices."), the apparatus comprising

- Means for determining or otherwise obtaining a total quantity of units of said good or service required to be purchased at said purchasing time as defined by one or more purchase orders relating to said purchasing time (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0031, "The prices may be set, for example, using predetermined prices agreed to by the buyer and seller involved in the transaction. In another implementation, pricing arrangements such as quantity discounts, group

discounts and conditional price variances are further automatically implemented in response to the transaction information and the approved contract details in the central transaction management arrangement."),

- Means for accessing details of terms under which said good or service may be purchased from each of said potential suppliers at said purchasing time (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0031), and
- Means for providing an indication of one or more consequences of allocating portions of said total quantity to be purchased among said plurality of potential suppliers (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0050, "The pricing rules may also include, for example, prices associated with a particular quantity of products, with different per-product prices being assigned for particular quantities of products.").

The Examiner notes, claim 1 recites an apparatus for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service at a particular purchasing time from a plurality of potential suppliers. This constitutes a statement of intended use, and does not limit the scope of the claim.

Referring to claim 2. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein said terms are defined in contracts, with at least one contract being established in respect of each of said potential suppliers (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0062).

Referring to claim 3. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus including a contract repository in which details of each contract established in respect of said suppliers are stored (Hahn-Carlson: at least Fig. 2, "Collaborative Contracts Manager 210").

Referring to claim 4. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein each contract is encoded prior to storage (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0057).

Referring to claim 5. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein each contract is encoded as a record prior to storage, each record including one or more of a unique contract identifier, a start date and an end date of the contract, a good type, and a delivery location (Hahn-Carlson: at least claim 11, "...wherein the computer and communications node includes a pricing engine programmed to use business rules and transaction information to derive a pricing term for a transaction, the transaction information including at least one of: a contract identifier for the transaction, an item identifier for an item being sold, quantity and order date.").

Referring to claim 6. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein said terms are included in said encoded contract record (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0057).

Referring to claim 7. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein said terms include a volume discount expressed as a discount function, defining a discount as a function of a quantity of said good or service (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0031, "The prices may be set, for example, using predetermined prices agreed to by the buyer and seller involved in the transaction. In another implementation, pricing arrangements such as quantity discounts, group discounts and conditional price variances are further automatically implemented in response to the transaction information and the approved contract details in the central transaction management arrangement.").

Referring to claim 8. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus including means for storing details of said one or more purchase orders (Hahn-Carlson: at least Fig. 2).

Referring to claim 9. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein the or each purchase order is encoded prior to storage thereof (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0057).

Referring to claim 10. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein each purchase order is encoded in terms of one or more of an order due date, a good type, a quantity of the good specified in

the purchase order, and a buyer location (Hahn-Carlson: at least claim 11, "...wherein the computer and communications node includes a pricing engine programmed to use business rules and transaction information to derive a pricing term for a transaction, the transaction information including at least one of: a contract identifier for the transaction, an item identifier for an item being sold, quantity and order date.").

Referring to claim 11. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus including a linking table for recording links between contracts and purchase orders (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0051).

Referring to claim 12. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus in which an aggregated quantity of goods or services purchased in respect of each contract is stored in said linking table (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0051).

Referring to claim 13. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus including a procurement decision interface which provides a visual indication of said consequences (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0041).

Referring to claim 14. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus wherein said procurement decision interface provides an indication of an average price per unit of a good required to be purchased, given that the total quantity of goods required at a specific purchasing time is allocated between a selected set of contracts in quantities prescribed by a user (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0041).

Referring to claim 15. Hahn-Carlson further discloses an apparatus including a data structure for storing a repository of demand schedules (Hahn-Carlson: at least paragraph 0063, "A variety of contract terms can be updated, such as contract eligibility, product availability, product price, price effective dates and tier eligibility.").

Referring to claim 17. The limitations of claim 17 closely parallel those of claim 1. Claim 17 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claim 1.

The Examiner notes, claim 17 recites a method for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service at a particular purchasing time from a plurality of potential suppliers. This constitutes a statement of intended use, and does not limit the scope of the claim.

Referring to claim 19. The limitations of claim 19 closely parallel those of claim 1 and 11-14.

Claim 19 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claim 1 and 11-14.

The Examiner notes, claim 19 recites an apparatus for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service at a particular purchasing time from a plurality of potential suppliers. This constitutes a statement of intended use, and does not limit the scope of the claim.

Referring to claim 20. The limitations of claim 20 closely parallel those of claim 1. Claim 20 is

rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claim 1.

The Examiner notes, claim 20 recites an apparatus for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service at a current purchasing time from a plurality of potential suppliers. This constitutes a statement of intended use, and does not limit the scope of the claim.

Referring to claims 21-26. The limitations of claims 21-26 closely parallel those of claims 1-15.

Claims 21-26 are rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1-15.

Referring to claim 27. The limitations of claim 27 closely parallel those of claim 1. Claim 27 is rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claim 1.

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The Examiner notes, claim 27 recites a method for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service from a plurality of potential suppliers at each of a plurality of purchasing times within a predetermined period. This constitutes a statement of intended use, and does not limit the scope of the claim.

(10) Response to Argument

The Appellant argues (Brief, page 5) that Hahn discloses a system that is intended to be an interface between a buyer system and a seller system and to determine pricing for a contract based upon both the buyer's and the seller's criteria, and that Appellants' invention, on the other hand, is aimed at helping a buyer to allocate a purchase among a plurality of sellers.

The Examiner notes, in response to Appellant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of Appellant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which Appellant relies are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). The claims merely recite providing an indication of one or more consequences of allocating portions of said total quantity to be purchased among said plurality of potential suppliers. The claims do not positively recite allocating the purchase.

However, Hahn discloses multiple instances that is aimed at helping a buyer to allocate a purchase among a plurality of sellers, for example:

- Hahn discloses a system wherein the pricing engine is adapted to identify transaction prices to a buyer for a selected transaction between the buyer and at least two sellers (Hahn: claim 12);

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- Hahn discloses a system wherein a pricing engine is adapted to identify prices for a particular transaction between the buyer and a plurality of sellers and to inform the buyer of the prices (Hahn: claim 14); and
- Hahn discloses a system that is configured and arranged for cross-referencing different identification numbers from a plurality of sources, the different identification numbers corresponding to a single product (Hahn: claim 25).

It is clear, contrary to Appellant's argument, that Hahn is concerned with a purchasing decision regarding a purchase, wherein the purchases are spread between multiple suppliers.

By his remarks, the Appellant is attempting to interject extraneous meaning to the claim language that fall outside the scope of the claim's broadest reasonable interpretation. USPTO personnel are to give claims their broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the supporting disclosure, but limitations appearing in the specification but not recited in the claim should not be read into the claim. E-Pass Techs., Inc. v. 3Com Corp., 343 F.3d 1364, 1369, 67 USPQ2d 1947, 1950 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (claims must be interpreted "in view of the specification" without importing limitations from the specification into the claims unnecessarily). In re Prater, 415 F.2d 1393, 1404-05, 162 USPQ 541, 550-551 (CCPA 1969). See also In re Zletz, 893 F.2d 319, 321-22, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989) ("During patent examination the pending claims must be interpreted as broadly as their terms reasonably allow.... The

reason is simply that during patent prosecution when claims can be amended, ambiguities should be recognized, scope and breadth of language explored, and clarification imposed.... An essential purpose of patent examination is to fashion claims that are precise, clear, correct, and unambiguous. Only in this way can uncertainties of claim scope be removed, as much as possible, during the administrative process.”).

The Appellant argues (Brief, page 6) that the instant invention is aimed at providing the user with an understanding of how spreading a purchase order amongst several suppliers will impact the overall picture (e.g., total price) by allowing the user to vary the allocation among the suppliers and providing an indication to the user of the consequences (e.g. how the total price varies) of so varying the allocation.

The Examiner notes, in response to Appellant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of Appellant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which Appellant relies are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

The Appellant notes (Brief, page 6) that there is nothing in any of Appellants' submissions that is even vaguely reminiscent of an argument that Hahn suffers from a 112 shortcoming and Appellants are completely befuddled by the Examiner's statement.

The Examiner notes, in Appellant's response filed 9/11/2006, the Appellant raised an issue that Hahn is not a valid prior art reference for the present application. The response filed in the Advisory Action (12/27/2006) was in part responsive to said issue, whereby it was shown that Hahn (filing date May 12, 2003) properly claims priority to Provisional Application 60/379,561 filed on May 10, 2002.

The Appellant voices (Brief, page 7) his inability to ascertain the Examiner's position relating to the intended use recitation found in claim 27.

The Examiner notes, claim 27 recites, "A method for use in making a purchase decision regarding purchase of a plurality of units of a good or service from a plurality of potential suppliers at each of a plurality of purchasing times within a predetermined period."

The Examiner further notes, as clearly set forth in the MPEP, if the body of a claim fully and intrinsically sets forth all of the limitations of the claimed invention, and the preamble merely states, for example, the purpose or intended use of the invention, rather than any distinct definition of any of the claimed invention's limitations, then the preamble is not considered a limitation and is of no significance to claim construction. Pitney Bowes, Inc. v. Hewlett-Packard Co., 182 F.3d 1298, 1305, 51 USPQ2d 1161, 1165 (Fed. Cir. 1999). See also Rowe v. Dror, 112 F.3d 473, 478, 42 USPQ2d 1550, 1553 (Fed. Cir. 1997) ("where a patentee defines a structurally complete invention in the claim body and uses the preamble only to state a purpose or intended use for the invention, the preamble is not a claim limitation"); Kropa v. Robie, 187 F.2d at 152,

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88 USPQ2d at 480-81 (preamble is not a limitation where claim is directed to a product and the preamble merely recites a property inherent in an old product defined by the remainder of the claim); STX LLC. v. Brine, 211 F.3d 588, 591, 54 USPQ2d 1347, 1350 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (holding that the preamble phrase "which provides improved playing and handling characteristics" in a claim drawn to a head for a lacrosse stick was not a claim limitation).

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

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